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## Israel Is LI's First Line of Defense

February 3, 2003

Long Island's defense industry, and the effort to grab a share of the federal money being spread around for homeland security, received a big boost last week when Rep. Steve Israel was named to the House Armed Services Committee.

"It's huge," said Phil Teel, who heads Northrop Grumman's Long Island operations. "Especially with his enthusiasm, his knowledge of the community and the market. By community, I mean Long Island, and by market, the market we're all hoping that we would get bigger in."

Israel (D-Dix Hills) becomes one of only two New Yorkers on the committee, which deals with appropriations for a variety of projects. "We have a defense-oriented economy, and Long Island defense companies have not had a place at the table in Washington because they haven't had a representative on the committee since 1994," he said, adding: "Procurement decisions are made within the Armed Services Committee. This puts Long Island, if not in the driver's seat, at least in the car."

What, specifically, can he do? Mention Israel and pork in the same sentence, and the congressman bristles. "I can never steer things anywhere," he said when asked whether he would have the power to steer business to local firms. "I'm not allowed to do that. But what I can do is showcase the natural defense heritage and the skill of the work force that we have."

#### The Ticker...

WAITER, THERE'S a fly in my soup ... oh, sorry, Todd, didn't recognize you. That's what people were saying after looking at press agent Todd Shapiro at Tuesday's Long Island Association luncheon. Just off the red-eye from San Diego, Shapiro rushed to freshen up and get a haircut and manicure so he would look just right when, as an event sponsor, he got to meet George and Barbara Bush and sit on the dais. But in his haste to get to the Crest Hollow Country Club, he left his suit jacket back at the barber's. Not to worry. Convention and Visitors Bureau president Michael Hollander drew on his experience in the

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hospitality industry and knew the catering hall would have [Plans More Layoffs in U.S.](#) a jacket or two available. Hollander and Shapiro ended up in a room that looked like a new branch of SYMS with all the tuxedos for the wait staff. Shapiro found one that fit - "better than my own jacket," he remarked - and thus was jacketed when he posed for pictures with the First Parents. As for those who asked him for a glass of water, he said, "In public relations, it's your job to serve, whether it's clients or appetizers." ...

Israel's newfound clout should be put to a test relatively quickly. In December, he convened a meeting of L.I. defense contractors to talk about how to get a chunk of the expected \$38 billion in federal homeland security spending. Afterward, Stony Brook University vice president Yacov Shamash formed a committee to come up with specific ideas. That committee is putting the finishing touches on a white paper and expects to present it to Israel this week.

"I charged them with telling me how I can be effective. I'm hoping to see specific, detailed ideas on how to structure and advance this task force, with goals and timetables," Israel said.

Teel, who is a member of the committee, wouldn't go into detail before showing the report to Israel, but he said it contains ideas for projects that would help defend the New York area from attack. Teel said he hoped Israel could open a few doors in Washington for presentations that would lead to funding.

Teel is optimistic Israel can come through - especially since New York has Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton on the Senate Armed Services Committee. "That makes it even more impressive because both of them are active people, they are engaged and involved.... It will make a difference," Teel said.

#### So What's Another Job?

Although others might disagree, Peter Sylver says "it's not all that big a deal" that he's added the chairmanship of the Nassau Industrial Development Agency to his myriad tasks as deputy Nassau County executive for economic affairs.

"The IDA was always my responsibility," Sylver said, noting the way County Executive Thomas Suozzi has restructured county government along vertical, chain-of-responsibility lines. As part of that, the IDA operations were put under economic development, Sylver's sphere.

Besides, it's only temporary.

Sylver replaces Lew Yevoli, who has moved over to be chairman of the planning commission - and who is expected to return to the IDA when a permanent planning head is found.

"We were in a crunch," Sylver said, noting the need for a new planning commission head and a busy planning year that's supposed to end with an update to the county's master plan. Yevoli, it was felt, could hit the ground running given his background as, among other things, a former Oyster Bay Town supervisor. "I pretty much said, 'Do this for now,'" Sylver said. "This, in effect, gives us more time to find the ideal person, irrespective of party affiliation, to chair the planning commission."

#### A Whole Box of Issues

It was a good week for issues. First, Long Island Association president Matt Crosson announced an initiative for identifying the Island's goals, complete with a network of committees, subcommittees and an annual goals conference. A day later, Northrop Grumman reached deep into its Grumman roots to revive the issues-based movers-and-shakers luncheons that were a staple of years past.

Wednesday's topic was affordable housing - identified by many as the most pressing issue facing L.I. - and the invitation-only group heard from Jim Morgo, head of the Long Island Housing Partnership. Up next, in April, is Dan Walsh, president of the New York State Business Council.

"We really believed that the time was ripe to begin them again," said Northrop

Grumman's Phil Teel, who noted that the impetus and the planning were provided by retired public relations executive-turned- consultant Dick Dunne.

"There are so many issues that a lot of our public forum entities - LIA, LIFT and others - get on the table ... but what we get as a result is dialogue," Teel said. "What we are interested in doing with these forums is getting a small group of movers and shakers within industry and the civic community together ... to get something done. We've got to help the politicians here. If we don't help them, all we'll be talking about are policy issues, and we'll never get actions going."

Added Dunne, "It's what we think we should do as a corporate citizen. ... We think there's a responsibility for companies like ours to do things like that. It's certainly within our power, and it's certainly within our means, and that's what we should be doing."

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